

NATO Expansion: Making the Case for the 2002 Summit

**A Monograph
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ABSTRACT

NATO Expansion: Making the Case for the 2002 Summit

by Major David T. Seigel, USA, 47 pages

This monograph examines the United States' position regarding further expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to include additional countries that were part of the former Warsaw Pact during the Cold War. This process has been evolving since the early 1990s and has already seen Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic join the ranks of the alliance in 1999. The purpose of this monograph is to recommend a position that the United States should favor at the 2002 Summit in Prague, where the allies will address further expansion.

This monograph begins by analyzing the history of NATO, an alliance that many consider one of the most successful in history, concentrating on NATO's evolving strategy after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact in 1991. This monograph also explains why the United States must stay involved in European affairs and keep Europe as a cornerstone of our national security strategy.

This monograph next analyzes lessons learned from previous alliance expansions and how the alliance has helped solve historic differences between countries, as in the case of France and Germany, or perhaps helped them at least avoid war, as in the case of Greece and Turkey. This section also analyzes the impact of the first round of expansion on the alliance and concludes with a brief country overview of each of the nine NATO aspirant countries.

This monograph next evaluates the suitability, feasibility, and acceptability of the nine aspirant countries wishing to join the alliance. It concludes that the United States should support an invitation for Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) at the 2002 Summit in Prague. This monograph finds that Albania is not yet politically or economically ready to join the alliance. Additionally, this monograph finds that although the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are domestically ready to join the alliance, they should not be invited next year due to legitimate geopolitical factors involving Russia.

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INTRODUCTION

*"This treaty, though born of fear and frustration, must, however, lead to positive social, economic, and political achievements if it is to live --- achievements which will extend beyond the time of emergency which gave it birth, and the geographic area which it now excludes."*¹ Lester B. Pearson, Canadian Undersecretary of State for External Affairs, 4 April 1949.

Since its inception in 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been the cornerstone security organization between the United States and the countries of Western Europe. Created to oppose and block further Soviet hegemony in Eastern and Central Europe, it also provided the security foundation for member countries to maintain peaceful and democratic governments.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States and its allies had to reconsider NATO's raison d'être. Recognizing a continued desire for close cooperation and mutual defense even after the end of the Soviet led Warsaw Pact, NATO has sought closer ties with its former adversaries in order to foster continued democratization and economic reform.

NATO could arguably be the most successful alliance in history. Facing an aggressive adversary possessing greater conventional combat power, the war-weary Western European democracies rallied around a United States determined to deter the growing Soviet territorial aspirations in Europe and avoid yet another world war. Never having to fight the Soviets and their Warsaw Pact allies, NATO miraculously "won" the war through perseverance, determination, and teamwork. For the western democracies, it was a tremendous feat, for "...to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is

¹ David S. Fadok, *Juggling the Bear: Assessing NATO Enlargement in Light of Europe's Past and Asia's Future* (United States Air Force Academy, Colorado, Institute for National Security Studies, 1999), 44. Lester Pearson was one of the primary architects of the North Atlantic Treaty at its inception fifty-two years ago.

not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.”²

In stark contrast to the first forty years of its existence, the final decade of the twentieth century for NATO was a decade of transformation. NATO's traditional focus from its beginning through the 1980s had been primarily on collective defense and transatlantic security. This remains the core function of NATO, but in this first decade of the twenty-first century, it has evolved to include a new focus on missions that support greater stability throughout all of Europe, to include conducting peace enforcement operations outside the alliance's boundaries.³

For the United States, the continued policy of engagement that began after the Cold War's end is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. European security has been and will remain a foundation of our foreign policy due to its importance in the political, military, and economic realms. In the political-military spectrum, NATO is the vehicle in which the United States expresses its interests and values to its European allies.⁴

Since its beginning, the countries that make up NATO have agreed that a key tenet of their organization is that it will have an “open door” policy to admit additional countries to the alliance that demonstrate democratic values and express a desire to join and contribute to the alliance.⁵ With the creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council at the Rome Summit in 1991, NATO began to develop a formal dialogue with the former Warsaw Pact countries of Central and Eastern Europe. With both NATO and the new

² Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 77.

³ John Borawski, “NATO Beyond 2000: A New Flashpoint for European Security,” *European Security* (Summer 2000), 1. These peace enforcement missions include those in Bosnia and Kosovo.

⁴ Robert E. Hunter, “NATO in the 21st Century: A Strategic Vision,” *Parameters* (Summer 1998), 15.

⁵ The North Atlantic Treaty (Article 10) states that “The parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European state in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty....,” 4 April 1949. This document was accessed on 19 January 2001 at <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/1999/9904> .

democracies interested in closer relations, NATO instituted further cooperative dialogue and activities at the Brussels Summit in 1994.⁶

Based on an extremely successful program called Partnership for Peace (PFP), these activities enabled NATO and non-NATO member countries to further enhance stability and democratic values in the region. These political/military activities help reinforce civilian control over the military and basic human rights in non-NATO countries where those conditions were not the norm. The PFP program is representative of the alliance's continued evolution and adherence to its policy to foster the solidification of democratic values and governments in the former Warsaw Pact countries.⁷

This evolution continued at the Madrid Summit in July 1997 when NATO extended its policy of engagement by inviting three PFP countries (Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary) to join the alliance, which they did in 1999. These three countries were the quickest to adhere to NATO's political and military guidelines, but many more countries in Eastern Europe were and are still eager to join the alliance as soon as possible.

Although there are specific political, economic, and military conditions each country must meet to join the alliance, perhaps the greatest obstacle to NATO expansion is the fear of igniting a new Cold War with a resurgent Russia angered over encroachment into its traditional sphere of influence. This concern has led the United States and its allies to pursue a cautious approach toward further NATO expansion.

The purpose of this monograph is to determine whether or not it is in the national security interest of the United States to support further NATO expansion at the next NATO Summit in 2002 and, if so, to what extent. As the twenty-first century dawns, the United States remains the dominant world power in a "global village" made up of

⁶ Ryan C. Hendrickson, "NATO's Open Door Policy and the Next Round of Enlargement," *Parameters* (Winter 2000-01), 54.

⁷ The author participated in a PFP exercise called Cooperative Determination in Sibiu, Romania in December 1997 as part of the U.S. Army delegation. Numerous other NATO allies

countries increasingly more dependant on each other economically and politically. The direction the current administration pursues regarding NATO expansion will have tremendous ramifications for decades to come.

This study will trace the evolution of NATO since the end of the Cold War and establish United States' relevance in a Europe increasingly united by the European Union, not only in the diplomatic and economic spheres, but in the military sphere as well. It will also use lessons learned from history that can help formulate a strategy for the future, as well as analyze how well Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic have integrated into NATO.

It is highly likely that the new presidential administration will continue to focus on maintaining close political, economic, and military ties with Europe under NATO auspices while encouraging further democratization of the former communist-bloc countries of Eastern Europe. In order to evaluate how well NATO expansion fits within the National Security Strategy of the United States, this monograph will use the following criteria:

- 1) **Suitability:** Will the acceptance of additional countries solidify their transition to a democratic government and free market economy?
- 2) **Feasibility:** Are the political, economic, and military conditions in the proposed NATO countries adequate for membership?
- 3) **Acceptability:** Are the potential negative consequences of further expansion of NATO, such as a potential worsening of relations with Russia or the economic cost of supporting the new members if their economies fail, worth the potential positive advantages?

The author will conclude the study recommendations for the strategy that the United States should pursue at the 2002 NATO summit regarding expansion.

sent delegations as well to participate in the exercise with the Romanian Army.

CHAPTER 1: The United States and NATO – an Evolving Strategy

“Tell me Marshal, how come you never attacked us? Was it the fact that we had the bomb? Was it the Seventh Army and the Sixth Fleet?” “No, it was because we knew that, if we took on one country, we were going to have to take on 16.”⁸

World War II was the greatest and most costly conflict the world has ever known and was fought in Europe to rid Europe from the yoke of Nazi Germany’s brutal oppression. In times of tremendous turmoil that only a war of this magnitude could create, the age old axiom that “the enemy of my enemy is my ally” was in effect as the United States and Great Britain joined hands with the communist Soviet Union to defeat Germany once and for all. In the ensuing years following Nazi Germany’s utter destruction, this convenient alliance collapsed as the Soviet Union hid Eastern and much of Central Europe behind an iron curtain and threatened to overrun the rest of Europe. Having fought two wars in Europe in a period of thirty years, the United States could ill afford to let another dictatorship sink Europe into the abyss.

NATO’s Evolution

In response to this communist threat, the West, led by the United States, created NATO in 1949. The alliance focused on collective defense for the next forty years, with Article 5 of the NATO Charter proving to be the bedrock upon which the entire alliance was built. This article required all NATO members to come to the aid of another member when attacked. This “all for one, one for all” policy would at times prove hard to maintain

⁸ Hunter, 15. This widely reported conversation was held between Admiral William Crowe, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev after the fall of the Berlin Wall and just prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. It highlights how the Soviet Union viewed they were facing a true alliance made up of willing nations while their own “alliance,” the Warsaw Pact, was not one made up of the willing and might not be able to be depended on when it counted.

diplomatically, but when faced with a powerful and aggressive foe, it held rock solid for the next forty years.⁹

The Cold War threatened to go hot on several occasions, perhaps coming closest during the establishment of Berlin Wall in 1961 or during the Cuban Missile Crisis of the following year, but by the late 1980s, the Soviet Union had culminated. With the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, the iron curtain that had kept their communist satellite countries in the dark for close to half a century dramatically lifted to reveal countries eager to pursue democratic reform and free market economies in order to improve their quality of life.

With the power vacuum created by the demise of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990s, the bi-polar world that all had become accustomed to had vanished. The United States, demonstrating its resolve in leading the coalition that routed the Iraqi Army in early 1991, remained a superpower and the leader of NATO. With the Soviet Union no longer a conventional threat to Western Europe, NATO had to deal with the problem of justifying its very reason for existence and its future purpose.¹⁰

With the unveiling of their new strategic concept in 1991, NATO leaders charted a new course for the alliance. No longer would it primarily be an alliance organized for just collective defense (although that still applied), it would now focus more on collective security to include political and economic aspects as well as military. This new concept also called for the NATO countries of Western Europe to assume a greater responsibility for defense within the alliance as well as increasing cooperation and dialogue with the new democracies of Eastern Europe. The newly created North Atlantic Cooperation

⁹ Hendrickson, "The Enlargement of NATO: The Theory and Politics of Alliance Expansion," *Parameters* (Winter 1999), 84.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 86.

Council (NACC) soon served as an entity to increase political and security cooperation with the former Warsaw Pact countries of Europe.¹¹

Beginning in 1994, NATO became heavily involved in a policy of engagement through a program called Partnership for Peace (PFP) that served as a foundation between NATO and non-NATO member countries to further enhance stability and democratic values in the region. As specified in the latest National Security Strategy, the PFP program “formalizes relations, provides a mechanism for mutual beneficial interaction and establishes a sound basis for combined action should that be desired.”¹²

The PFP program has steadily improved since its inception and consists of a series of exercises and programs individually tailored to fulfill each country’s needs. The PFP program covers a variety of political-military activities, such as crisis management, civilian control of the military, peacekeeping operations, as well as numerous other exercises. Currently there are 26 partner countries within the PFP program:¹³

Albania	Bulgaria	Ireland	Lithuania	Slovak Rep	FYROM
Armenia	Croatia	Kazakhstan	Moldova	Slovenia	Turkmenistan
Austria	Estonia	Kyrgyz Rep	Romania	Sweden	Ukraine
Azerbaijan	Finland	Latvia	Russia	Switzerland	Uzbekistan
Belarus	Georgia				

The PFP program also proved to be a great preparation and transition vehicle for future NATO membership. Three former Warsaw Pact countries involved in the PFP program were invited to join NATO at the Madrid Summit in July 1997. These three countries, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary, had quickly adapted to NATO’s political and military requirements and established a potential course for other PFP countries to emulate in their attempts to join the alliance.

¹¹ Fadok, 19.

¹² *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* (The White House, December 1999), 29-30. For more information on the PFP program, see Colonel William R. Puttmann, Jr.’s monograph entitled “Partnership for Peace: NATO’s Future?” from the US Army’s School of Advanced Military Studies.

¹³ “NATO Topics: The Atlantic Alliance”, accessed on 19 February 2001 at

Although NATO had expanded previously, this expansion differed markedly from previous expansions. Prior to the formal entrance of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary into NATO in 1999, Greece and Turkey had joined the alliance in 1952, West Germany in 1955, and Spain in 1982.¹⁴ These countries all joined NATO during the Cold War in the bi-polar world that existed prior to the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact, a period when it was hard to straddle the fence on which side a country would choose should the war turn hot. The three latest NATO members, all former Warsaw Pact countries, are examples that the new democracies of Eastern and Central Europe have the potential to chart their own course internationally.

The 1999 expansion is not the only indicator that the NATO of 1989 is not the NATO of today. Perhaps the greatest change in NATO since the end of the Cold War was its desire to interdict in conflicts *outside* the borders of its member countries. The first major example of this was the 1995 bombing campaign to help bring and end to the wars that followed the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991 and the subsequent and on-going peace enforcement operations in Bosnia.

A more recent and significant example would be the seventy-eight day air campaign conducted against Serbia in 1999 in order to halt their ethnic cleansing campaign in their troubled province of Kosovo. Although this monograph will not discuss in great detail the complexities of Operation Allied Force, it is important to note that all nineteen NATO countries chose to stand together and stop aggression in Europe, even though that aggression occurred within the confines of a sovereign, non-NATO country. This determination to maintain peace and stability in Europe and perhaps start Serbia on the

www.nato.int/docu/topics/2000/en .

¹⁴ International Security Affairs, *Strengthening Transatlantic Security: A U.S. Strategy for the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, December 2000), 22.

road to democratization like the rest of Europe is exemplified by the 60,000 NATO peacekeepers currently in Bosnia and Kosovo.¹⁵

These actions are examples of NATO's current strategic concept, which was announced during the Washington Summit in April 1999. This strategic concept emphasized deterrence, rapid response, and increased technological advancement for NATO's forces but, more importantly, it also showed that "NATO's strategic vision has evolved from a single-minded focus on the threat from the east, as prevailed during the Cold War, to a European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI), more expansive in concept and focused on no identified enemy."¹⁶

The creation of the ESDI was necessary because of the common recognition by both the US and its European allies that the European countries should play a stronger role in European security rather than merely rely on their superpower ally to carry the preponderance of the load. This more balanced approach was sought by both sides and calls for the European Union to establish military capabilities to respond to a crisis where NATO involvement is not necessary.¹⁷ Although this program is in its infancy and was not created to challenge the need for NATO in the future, it is a potential outcome that is beyond the scope of this monograph.

Yet another important change in the evolution of NATO is its efforts to encourage continued democratization in Russia and placate the obvious fears that NATO is merely taking advantage of their current period of weakness to move the NATO boundary as far east as possible. This "get it while the getting is good" fear of Russia's is a tough one for the US and NATO to overcome, but they have gone to great measures to ensure that

¹⁵ GEN Wesley K. Clark, "The Role of US Forces in Europe," *The Future of the American Military Presence in Europe* (May 2000), 18-19.

¹⁶ Ibid, 17.

¹⁷ Secretary General Lord Robertson, "NATO in the New Millennium," *NATO Review* (Winter 1999), 5.

Russia has a voice, but not a vote, in NATO activities. Since 1997, NATO and Russia have participated in a Permanent Joint Council (PJC) created to serve as “an important venue for consultations, cooperation and, wherever possible, consensus-building” between the two entities.¹⁸

Although the NATO of yesteryear was primarily a collective defense pact, where each country would come to the aid of another NATO country if it was attacked, NATO has evolved to become more of a system of cooperative security. Some of the highlights of their cooperative security activities include helping create political and military options when a crisis arises, encouraging democratization and stability throughout non-NATO Europe, and attempting to closely coordinate and foster a good relationship with Russia.¹⁹ Although it still maintains its collective defense agreements, alliance members recognize that a crisis occurring just outside its borders can affect the security of the entire alliance, which is precisely why NATO is so involved in ensuring stability in the Balkans.

Why the US Must Stay Involved in NATO

The twenty-first century has dawned and revealed a period of potential peace in Europe that would have been hard to believe only fifteen years ago. With the fall of Slobodan Milosovich, even the former Yugoslavia, for so long a pariah, appears to want to join the rest of Europe. Free from Soviet or Russian hegemony and fear of the imminent start of World War III, it is truly a time of hope for Europe. Alas, with the dramatic decrease in Russian military capability in the 1990s and the steady political, economic, and now military endeavors of the European Union, the argument could be made that it is now time for the United States to let Europe stand on their own and take

¹⁸ International Security Affairs, 34.

¹⁹ Stanley R. Sloan and J. Michelle Forrest, “NATO’s Evolving Role and Missions,” *NATO’s Role, Missions and Future* (1999), 13.

advantage of the victory in the Cold War and withdraw from the forefront of European affairs.

Although the primary purpose of this monograph is to evaluate further NATO expansion from a US perspective, it is necessary to first establish NATO's enduring importance to the United States. The author submits that to diminish US involvement in NATO or European affairs would be a "geostrategic mistake of the first order."²⁰ The United States, or any country for that matter, can ill afford to be so focused on the events of today and the anticipated events in the next few years without trying to visualize how decisions made today can have dramatic ramifications a decade or two in the future. It is extremely important for the United States to stay closely involved with Europe through NATO in order to maintain its position as the leading world power politically and militarily for the foreseeable future.

Europe is like a toddler, let's raise 'em right. Although at first glance, this might seem somewhat arrogant but the fact remains that the European Union is increasingly becoming the voice and direction behind European affairs in the political, economic, and even military realms, and it would be wise for the United States to continue to foster a close relationship so that there is no irrecoverable fallout *in the teenage years*. From the creation of a common currency and government to the beginning of a separate military force designed to augment NATO or act without NATO, it is not hard to imagine a separate, unified, and powerful Europe independent of the United States. The United States should foster continued interdependency, and NATO is an organization that does that.

²⁰ Bruce P. Jackson, "The Conservative Case for NATO," *Policy Review* (April/May 1999), 46.

Russia is down...but not out for the count. History shows that Russia has traditionally been the great power from the east that had great influence in Europe, especially in the Slavic countries. This was particularly true during the Cold War, when Soviet troops occupied most of Eastern Europe. It is true that Russia is in economic chaos and its military appears to be a shadow of its former self, but that just might not be the case in ten or twenty years.

In fact, some experts see today's Russia as a "Weimar Russia" that is susceptible to a collapse that would lead to the rise of an authoritarian regime in a manner similar to the rise of the Nazis and Hitler in Germany in the early 1930s.²¹ The weak Russia of today still has a 1.2 million man army and, perhaps more importantly, still controls vast stockpiles of nuclear missiles.²² Not only must the United States continue to try to keep Russia in the fold of democratic nations, it should also ensure that it stays an integral part of Europe's defenses as a hedge against a resurgent Russia, and NATO does precisely that.

NATO is vital for force projection contingencies. Europe's geographic location alone makes it incredibly important, and necessary, for the United States to maintain a strong NATO. During recent Army After Next (AAN) Wargames which depicted potential US conflicts beyond 2010, in every scenario it was necessary for US forces to respond quickly prior to the attacking enemy (unnamed major competitor) consolidating gains, be it in southeastern Europe, northeastern Asia, or the Middle East. On the contrary,

...we assumed initially that we would be able to project forces from the continental United States early enough to block the enemy on the ground and thwart his operational design, we later found that expectation to be totally unrealistic. Some form of forward stationing, whether of materiel or forces in being, had to be available at strategic intermediate staging bases in Europe.²³

²¹ Michael G. Roskin, "The Emerging Europe: Power Configurations for the Next Century," *Parameters* (Winter 1999-2000), 92.

²² Fadok, 13.

²³ MG Robert H. Scales, Jr., "Europe as a Strategic Staging Base for 21st Century Stabilization Operations," *The Future of the American Military Presence in Europe* (May 2000), 57.

For the United States to be able to respond quickly enough with the force required to compel a capable adversary to submit to its will, Europe is essential for geographic reasons alone. Maintaining a strong presence and leadership in NATO gives the US that flexibility.

The US and Europe share the same values and interests. The National Security Strategy defines vital national interests as “those of broad, overriding importance to the survival, safety and vitality of our nation...and that of our allies.”²⁴ The US and European countries both actively promote democratic governments, free-market economies, and the basic human rights of all individuals. These baseline core values form the common thread that tightly binds the US and Europe together. NATO is an expression of that common interest and has been and should remain the organization that defines US engagement in Europe.

NATO has dramatically transformed itself in the last decade since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Faced with completely different strategic realities, it has evolved sufficiently to still meet the needs of the United States and its European allies as they remain strategic partners at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Having discussed the historic evolution of NATO and why the alliance is still of the greatest importance to the United States, it is necessary to discuss in further detail previous NATO expansions and identify those countries that aspire to join NATO at the 2002 NATO Summit.

²⁴ *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*, 1.

CHAPTER 2: NATO Expansion: An In-Progress Review

"Nations exist in time as well as in space: without an understanding of the past, it will be difficult to shape the future."²⁵

In order to adequately propose a strategy for the United States to pursue at the 2002 NATO summit, it is necessary to first look at the nature of alliances and how an alliance can positively affect, or at least diminish, regional problems between countries. This chapter will also analyze the effects of the first-round entry of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into NATO in 1999 from a perspective of the United States and that of Europe. Additionally, it is necessary to introduce the NATO aspirant countries and explore the star-crossed path that they have traveled to arrive at their desire to join the alliance.

How NATO Has Reduced Intra-Alliance Tensions

Throughout the history of Europe, NATO member countries have fought each other in numerous wars that are in some cases distant memories of ages past, but in other cases are culturally present today. Like bricks in a wall, the NATO countries were able to stand firmly together and subjugate their differences and regional disagreements so that they could withstand the powerful wind of a common foe – the Soviet Union. The power of the Soviet Union and the length of the Cold War proved to be the mortar that connected the bricks (NATO countries) together and enabled the alliance (wall) to stand firm. With the break-up of the Soviet Union, the alliance was strong enough to survive and transform its mission to reflect current realities without its member countries reverting to earlier rivalries.

Effective alliances have the tendency to decrease the likelihood of intra-alliance conflict. Just as is commonly observed in group dynamics, individuals that make up the

²⁵ Carl Bildt, "A Second Chance in the Balkans," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2001), 149.

group might have distinct differences or problems with each other, but are able to overcome or diminish their effects *because they are on the same team*. There are several examples where NATO countries have demonstrated this behavior, such as France/Germany and Greece/Turkey.

When NATO was founded in 1949 near the beginning of the Cold War, it was only four short years since the end of the third war in the previous seventy-five years in which Germany and France had fought each other at the cost of millions of dead on both sides. Had someone suggested that about fifty years later, France and a unified Germany would have open borders, completely settled border disputes, shared a common currency, and had combined military formations, it would have been incredulous.²⁶ Although by no means is the close integration of France and Germany only due to NATO, *serving on the same team* helped facilitate the process and reduce, if not eliminate, the nationalistic tension that had been previously present.

The deep animosity and distrust between Greece and Turkey is an example where tensions have definitely not been eliminated like it largely has between France and Germany. However, the argument could be made that NATO “mediated and contained” their rivalry to the point that they have so far avoided open warfare, which would have likely not been the case had they both not been members of the same alliance.²⁷ Greek and Turk officers serve side by side on NATO staffs and their militaries participate together in NATO exercises. There is no doubt that Greece and Turkey still have tremendous disagreements over contentious issues such as Cyprus and the Balkans, but the fact remains that they have avoided war against each other in an extremely

²⁶ Alexander Vershbow, US Ambassador and Permanent Representative on the North Atlantic Council, speech given 11 May 2000, available at www.sun00781.dn.net/man/nato/news/2000/000511-nato .

²⁷ Fadok, 24.

volatile region. The *synergistic effects of being teammates* in the alliance helped stabilize the region and avert conflict.

The break-up of the former Yugoslavia and its ensuing war consumed NATO, the United States and Europe in the 1990s. It is well-known that animosity between the different ethnic groups has existed for centuries and many marvel at the ability of Tito to suppress this tendency for the betterment of the country for over thirty years...a true anomaly in the Balkans. Perhaps the different ethnic groups felt they were part of something bigger?

Effects of NATO Expansion to include Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic

There are many Americans that oppose NATO expansion, primarily because they think it will alienate Russia, make the alliance too unwieldy, or merely divide Europe a little further east this time. George Kennan, creator of the containment theory that

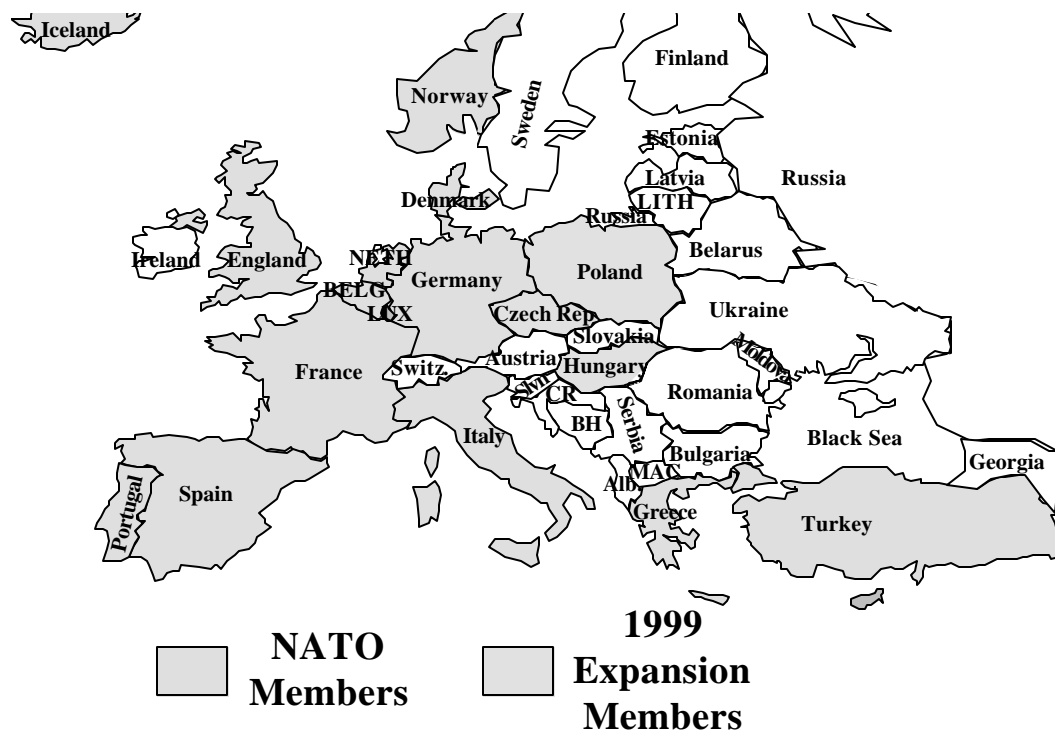


Figure 1: 1999 NATO Expansion

formulated US strategy during the Cold War, describes NATO expansion as “the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-Cold War era.”²⁸ Only time will tell whether or not it proved wise for the US to support a policy of NATO expansion, but without the ability to truly foretell the future, it is possible only to look at the ramifications of the first round of expansion.

Since the invitation to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to join NATO in 1997 and their formal entry into the alliance in 1999, it clearly appears that enlargement was a sound strategy for the United States, Europe, and the three new members themselves. Alas, not only has the sky not fallen, but the Russians have not become reactionary, more hegemonic, or disassociated themselves with the West. During the Cold War these three countries were forcibly held within the Soviet sphere of influence, with revolts being crushed or suppressed in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Poland (1981). But those days have long passed and Russia had no legitimate cultural or long-term claim to the new countries and, although they obviously did not favor the expansion, did nothing substantive to oppose it then or since.

Indeed, NATO also wisely made several key overtures to Russia to show them that they had no intent of purposely flaunting the admission of three former Soviet satellite into their exclusive alliance. The NATO-Russia Partnership Council, established in 1997, serves as “a venue for consultations, cooperation, and – wherever possible – consensus building between the Alliance and Russia.”²⁹

²⁸ George Kennan, “A Fateful Error,” *The New York Times* (5 February 1997), A23. This reference was cited in James H. Wyllie’s article entitled “NATO’s Bleak Future” in *Parameters* (Winter 1998-99), 115. George Kennan, now 97 years old, has been involved in US relations with Europe and the Soviet Union since well before WWII. According to a PBS website (www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/bomb/peopleevents/pandeAMEX57.html), he opposed the initial creation of NATO in 1949 as well. Time will tell of the cogency of his position.

²⁹ Johanna Granville, “The Many Paradoxes of NATO Enlargement,” *Current History* (April 1999), 168.

Although Russia does not have veto power over any alliance decisions, it does have a consultative role in NATO actions through the Permanent Joint Council (PJC), as well as participate in peacekeeping operations in the Balkans next to NATO units.³⁰ These new overtures designed to lessen obvious Russian fears and agitation were tested during and after the 1999 NATO campaign against Serbia over Kosovo. Although it is too early to know for sure, it appears that NATO's relations with Russia are starting to improve, as indicated by Russia re-opening NATO's Information Office in Moscow in February 2001, which had been closed since the beginning of the NATO air campaign against Yugoslavia in March 1999.³¹ As NATO ponders further expansion, it would be wise to continue, if not increase, close cooperation and consultation with Russia.

Since the United States and its European Allies have already started down the path of alliance enlargement, supporters and critics of the policy will be looking closely at how the initial post-Cold War expansion has worked out. In the few short years since their entry, the three newest members of the NATO alliance have contributed significantly, both in times of peace and in times of war. For example, during Operation Allied Force in 1999, notable contributions include the use of Hungarian airspace and complete democratic support for a war conducted against a country on its southern border.³² The Hungarian government has been very supportive of NATO actions in the Balkans for many years now and has allowed the use of an air base near Taszar in southern Hungary to serve as staging base for entry to and exit from Bosnia for hundreds of thousands of NATO peacekeepers since 1995.

Poland has also been a stellar supporter of NATO operations in the Balkans and offered to deploy ground troops if that option had been necessary in Kosovo, which is a

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Associated Press, "NATO chief, Russia face a tough task," *The Kansas City Star* (20 February 2001), A9.

³² Hendrickson, 61.

lot more than several NATO countries that had long been members had offered. The Czech Republic's President Havel also gave firm support to NATO's combat operations, although it must be mentioned that a large sector of the Czech public did not support the campaign.³³

The three new members of NATO not only provided physical and moral support when their new alliance needed it the most (wartime), they have supported alliance goals and values at other times as well. Some examples include "troop concentrations to SFOR, their ongoing efforts to improve defense planning and implement defense reforms, their constructive participation in a range of NATO activities and deliberations," as well as their efforts in improving NATO's relationships with Russia and Ukraine.³⁴

Perhaps the greatest indicator of their true desire to join NATO, which in itself is a defacto representation of the democratic West, was their resolve to truly change their behavior in important areas that are requirements for joining the alliance, such as civilian control of the military, settling border disputes with neighboring countries, and providing broader rights to minority groups in their countries. Examples include the Czech government apologizing for expelling ethnic Germans from Sudeten Czechoslovakia shortly after World War II, Hungary's efforts to solve border and ethnic issues with Romania and Slovakia, and Poland firing senior generals that opposed civilian control over the military.³⁵

Thus, the first round of enlargement advanced US security interests because it solidified the stabilization of democracy in Europe and should be a "positive" indicator for supporting further expansion in the next few years. In the view of the NATO aspirant countries, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic are "pioneering the way towards

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ International Security Affairs, 22.

³⁵ Jane M.O. Sharp, "The Case for Opening Up NATO," *The Future of NATO* (1999), 27.

integration with Europe,” and have set the example for what it takes to join the alliance and function as contributing member.³⁶ Having described the contributions of the latest members and their effects on the alliance, it is now necessary to introduce the countries that are aspiring to join NATO in the next round of enlargement.

NATO Aspirants: An Overview

As indicated by the map below, there are nine countries seeking to join the alliance at the NATO Summit next year in Prague.

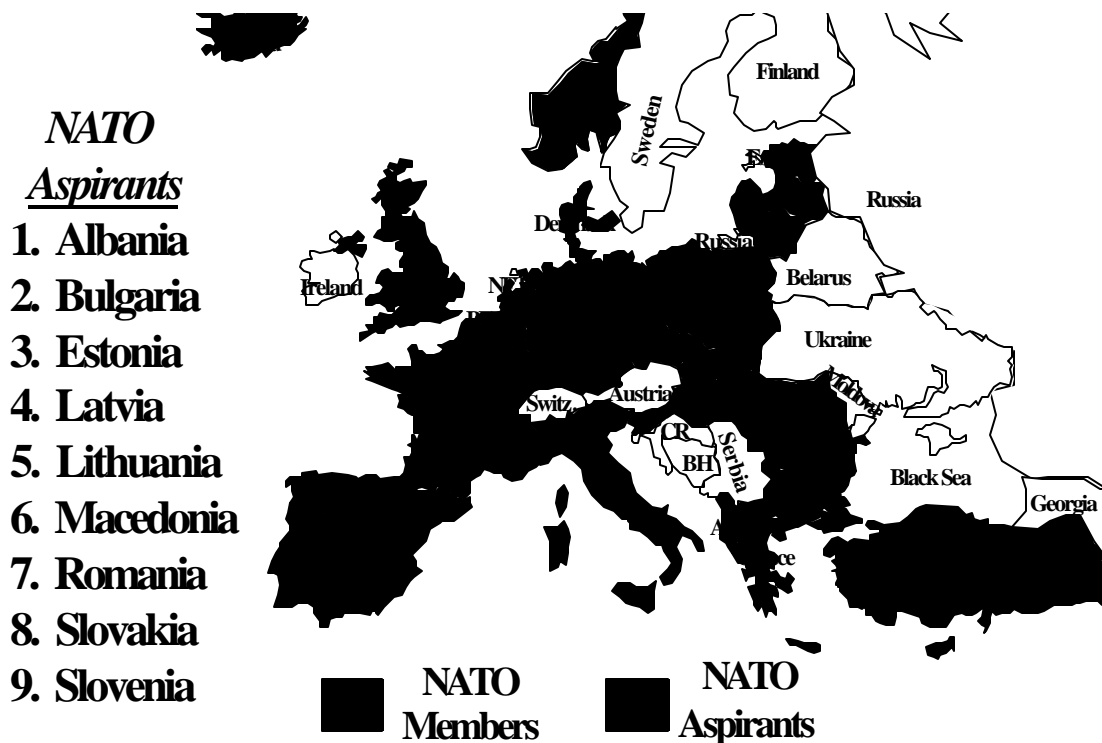


Figure 2: NATO Aspirants – Prague Hopefuls

Each of these countries is participating in a Membership Action Plan (MAP), which is a NATO initiative started in 1999 to help aspirant countries strengthen their likelihood of receiving an invitation to join the alliance. This program “provides for concrete feedback

³⁶ Sebestyen L. Gorka, “NATO After Enlargement: Is the Alliance Better Off?” *NATO Review*(Autumn 1999), 33.

and advice from NATO to aspiring countries on their own preparations directed at achieving future membership.³⁷

The MAP focuses on five primary areas of greatest interest to the alliance members. A brief overview of the categories follows.³⁸

1) *Political and Economic*. Aspirant countries should settle ethnic and border disputes with neighboring countries through peaceful processes, ensure they have civilian control of the military, and promote democratic governments and free market economies.

2) *Defense and Military Issues*. Participation in the PFP program is the core recommendation, but each country must address how they best can contribute militarily to the alliance.

3) *Resource Issues*. This category refers to the requirement of each aspirant country to designate sufficient resources towards defense expenditures, just as they would have to if they were members of NATO.

4) *Security Issues*. Protecting classified material and alliance secrets is hard to accomplish, but very important. Countries wishing to join the alliance must be able to show that they can safeguard classified material.

5) *Legal Issues*. This last measure is meant to highlight the need for the domestic laws of each country to not prohibit activities such as joining an alliance or other related security measures.

It is beyond the scope of this monograph to provide a detailed description of the governments, militaries, and economies of each country attempting to join the alliance. However, it is necessary to provide the background information to evaluate a potential

³⁷ "NATO's Membership Action Plan," accessed on 11 March 2001 at www.otan.nato.int/docu/facts/2000/nato-map , 1.

³⁸ Ibid, 2. This is the NATO official website and provides a comprehensive overview of what measures each country must take to meet entrance requirements. All five areas came from this

US position at the NATO Summit in Prague in 2002. An overview of each of the NATO aspirant countries follows.

Albania³⁹

Politically, Albania is an emerging democracy that is struggling to overcome years of political upheaval, economic distress, and regional instability involving their ethnic Albanian brethren in neighboring Kosovo and Macedonia. Although they ended over four decades of communism in 1990, the transition to democracy has proven tougher than that in other former communist countries. On a more positive note, Albania is represented by a democratically elected president and legislature.

Economically, Albania has long been known as the poorest country in Europe, but is beginning to establish a viable free market economy, with a GDP increase of 8% in 1999 despite the turmoil caused by the influx of ethnic Albanian refugees from Kosovo and their eventual repatriation. It is not realistic to believe that the Albanian economy would provide any positive benefits to the rest of the alliance countries anytime in the near future, but the recent stabilization of their economy could at least prohibit it from being too much of an economic drain on the other member countries.

In the military realm, Albania provided a staging base for potential NATO ground operations during the alliance's war with Yugoslavia over Kosovo. Although the inadequacies of the Albanian infrastructure became readily apparent during the campaign, the military is continuing to reform and regularly participates in activities with NATO such as PFP. The Albanian civilian government controls the military and committed 1.5% of its GDP to defense related activities in 1999.

same reference.

³⁹ CIA Factbook (2000), accessed on 13 March 2001 at <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/al.html#Govt> . All information in the description of Albania can be found at the above mentioned website.

Bulgaria

In the last four years, Bulgaria has significantly increased its efforts to integrate politically, economically, and militarily with the West. The democratically elected president and legislature have declared that their primary foreign policy goals are “integration with the West, security and border defense, and cooperation with their Balkan neighbors.”⁴⁰ The Bulgarian government has been extremely supportive of NATO activities in the last few years, with the most notable contribution occurring during the NATO air campaign in 1999. By allowing the use of Bulgarian airspace for NATO aircraft to attack Serbia, which borders Bulgaria on the west (see Figure 2), the Bulgarian leadership firmly sided with NATO in what was an unpopular campaign throughout much of the Balkans.⁴¹

Economically, Bulgaria initially had trouble transforming from a communist based system to a free market economy, but appears to have turned the corner and has had steady increases in its GDP in the last few years, and expects to grow at about “3 percent a year as privatization expands and exports to the EU increase.”⁴² With a large coastline on the Black Sea and borders with Romania, Greece, and Turkey, Bulgaria might very well become a trade center of the Balkans as their economy improves.

Practicing civilian control of the military, Bulgaria has conducted an intense restructuring and reorganization since it began the process to join NATO in 1997. The Bulgarian military regularly participates in PFP exercises and has deployed forces to participate in NATO's peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. They are in the process of streamlining their army in accordance with NATO standards, reducing it from

⁴⁰ Nicole Smith, “Country Profile of the Republic of Bulgaria,” (August 2000), 2. President Stoyanov and Prime Minister Kostov have both been instrumental in integrating Bulgaria with the West since they took office in 1997.

⁴¹ Nina N. Nikolova, “The Republic of Bulgaria and NATO—Partnership and Integration,” (June 2000), 59.

⁴² Smith, 56.

93,000 to 43,000 while modernizing their forces to better fit NATO's needs. During this period of intense transformation, defense spending has remained at about 3.7% of the GDP.⁴³

Estonia

As one of the three Baltic countries that separated from the Soviet Union when they disintegrated in 1991, Estonia has effectively transitioned to a parliamentary democracy with a strong economy. In the very shadow of a historical power (Russia) that is currently weak, Estonia has had great impetus to seek to strengthen ties and integrate with the European Union (EU) and NATO before Russia gains strength.⁴⁴

Economically, Estonia quickly transitioned to a market economy in the mid 1990s after its independence. Although their economy worsened in 1999 following the Russian financial crisis of the previous year, it had seen steady economic growth throughout the decade due to its privatization efforts, open trading policies, independent currency, and ties with the West. By 2000, the economy had rebounded and the GDP is expected to grow 4% annually.⁴⁵

Estonia has established several defense policy priorities, namely the development of a small but capable military controlled by civilians, participation in international peacekeeping operations, and cooperation and interoperability with NATO. Estonia views NATO as the only organization that can provide it true security and is wary of a revitalized Russia wishing to exert undue influence on its former territories. Active in PFP and involved in peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, Estonia believes its small but professional military could be a great asset to NATO.⁴⁶ In 1999, Estonia committed

⁴³ Ibid, 26-27. These streamlined forces include a rapid reaction force and two corps headquarters with subordinate brigades.

⁴⁴ Mathew T. Higham, "Country Profile of the Republic of Estonia," (August 1999), 1.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 47.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 19-20.

1.2% of its GDP to defense related activities, which is under the NATO recommended level of 2%.⁴⁷

Latvia

Like its neighbor to the north, Latvia gained its independence from the Soviet Union upon its collapse and thus shares the same security concerns over Russia's potential revitalization. Like most of the countries of Eastern Europe, it has established an effective democratically elected government. Latvia's foreign policy objectives center on integration with the West (meaning entrance into the EU and NATO), maintaining good relations with Russia, and cooperation with its neighboring Baltic countries.⁴⁸

With its economy interwoven with Russia's, Latvia slipped into a recession following the 1998 Russian financial crisis, but appears to be rebounding to the impressive levels it had seen throughout the 1990s. Latvia expects to have a 3.5% increase in the GDP in 2000 and economic indicators appear positive in the future due to its location, strong trading ties with the West, and increased privatization.⁴⁹

Latvia practices civilian control of its military and is in the process of developing small but capable forces that are fully interoperable with and capable of contributing to the NATO alliance. It sees its future as aligned with the West and has established numerous bilateral security agreements to ensure its protection, as well as participating in numerous PFP exercises and peacekeeping operations, albeit at a very small level.⁵⁰ Latvia's defense budget percentage of the GDP was the lowest in Europe at .9% in 1999.

⁴⁷ CIA Factbook (2000), accessed on 14 March 2001 at <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/en.html> .

⁴⁸ Brandon S. Clark, "Country Profile of the Republic of Latvia," (December 1999), 2.

⁴⁹ CIA Factbook (2000), accessed on 14 March 2001 at <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/lg.html> .

⁵⁰ Clark, 23-24.

Lithuania

Like the other two Baltic countries, Lithuania openly states that its primary goal is to fully integrate economically and military with the West. Led by a democratically elected government which practices control over its military, it has the largest military, defense budget, and population of the three Baltic countries. Like its neighbors, by refusing to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1992 it initially had strained relations with Russia, Lithuania has since succeeded in stabilizing relations with its former master.⁵¹

Lithuania's economy is heavily linked to Russia's economy and thus suffered through a recession following Russia's financial woes in 1998. Although in 1999, the GDP declined by 3% and unemployment was over 10%, it was expected to improve to a 2% increase in the GDP in 2000.⁵²

Militarily, Lithuania's primary objectives call for integration into NATO and force modernization. Their active duty military, consisting of less than 13,000 personnel but still the largest of the Baltic countries, has participated in PFP exercises and alongside NATO forces conducting peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. They are in the process of modernizing their forces and equipment to better suit the needs of the alliance. Although their defense related portion of the GDP was only 1.5% in 1999, it is projected to be 2.5% in the next few years as they continue modernization.⁵³

Macedonia (FYROM)

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) became an independent country in 1991 following the breakup of Yugoslavia and avoided the wars that inflamed the region largely due to a preventive deployment force under UN auspices that included

⁵¹ Mathew T. Higham, "Country Profile of the Republic of Lithuania," (July 1999), 41.

⁵² CIA Factbook (2000), accessed on 14 March 2001 at <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/lh.html> .

⁵³ Christopher Bell, "NATO Enlargement: Military Capabilities and Modernization Plans of

US forces shortly thereafter to prevent Serbian aggression against the fledgling democracy.⁵⁴ Macedonia is a parliamentary democracy and is made up primarily of Macedonians with a large ethnic Albanian population estimated to be at 22%, although some sources believe this could be as high as 40%.⁵⁵ By far the biggest problem the Macedonian government faces is the growing unrest and violence demonstrated by ethnic Albanians in the western portion of Macedonia which directly confronts NATO's mission in the Balkans.⁵⁶

Macedonia was the poorest of all the regions of the former Yugoslavia and has struggled to improve its economy, but has seen steady improvement in its GDP, realizing 3% annual GDP increases in the late 1990s.⁵⁷ This period of economic improvement was interrupted due to the refugee crisis caused by the Kosovo conflict in 1999, but appears to have only been temporary.

Macedonia's military is small and would be incapable of defending itself against outside aggression without US/NATO intervention. Macedonia proved to be a staunch supporter of NATO during the 1999 Kosovo conflict by providing staging bases for both air and ground forces and continues to support the ongoing KFOR peacekeeping mission. Macedonia, much like the Baltic countries, inherited almost no military equipment from their former occupiers, and had to start with almost nothing.⁵⁸

Potential Follow-on Candidates," *NATO's Role, Missions, and Future* (1999), 27.

⁵⁴ The author served as a sector commander on the Macedonia – Serbian patrol line (the border was not finalized until March 2001) as part of Task Force Able Sentry for six months in 1996.

⁵⁵ Tracy Arcaro, "Country Profile of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)," (December 1998), 28.

⁵⁶ Steven Erlanger, "Militant Albanians Pose Threat in Balkans," *New York Times* (12 March 2001), A-1. This situation continues to develop and could pose dire consequences to NATO's strategy in the Balkans. In many ways it is similar to the ethnic Albanian/Serb conflict in Kosovo since the militant ethnic Albanians in Macedonia are calling for increased autonomy and even a "Greater Albania."

⁵⁷ Arcaro, 36.

⁵⁸ Bell, 28.

Macedonia is regularly involved in PFP exercises with NATO countries and devotes 2.5% of its GDP to defense related activities.⁵⁹

Romania

Romania had many supporters for first round entry into the alliance, and its democratic government feels it has a much stronger stance for entry in the next round. Although the corrupt and tyrannical Ceausescu regime was violently overthrown in December 1989, former communist leaders still controlled the government until 1996, making Romania's transition to a true democracy a very recent occurrence.⁶⁰

Romania has found the Membership Action Plan (MAP) as a useful guide toward full membership and integration into the alliance, should they garner enough support when it comes time for alliance members to vote on further expansion. The primary drawback in the case for Romania is its continued economic weakness. Although it appears that their economic situation will likely improve in the next few years, they experienced a 4.6% decrease in their GDP in 1999, as well a 40% inflation rate with 12% unemployment.⁶¹

Despite the economic woes experienced in the last few years, Romania has increased its efforts to revamp its military forces to meet NATO's expectations. They have regularly allotted over 2% of their GDP to defense related activities throughout the late 1990s. Their parliament in 1999 approved measures that call for equipment modernization and restructuring of its armed forces in the next few years, with notable changes including a drop from 168,000 to 112,000 personnel revamped into a force that

⁵⁹ CIA Factbook (2000), accessed on 14 March 2001 at <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mk.html> .

⁶⁰ CIA Factbook (2000), accessed on 16 March 2001 at <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ro.html> .

⁶¹ Radu Bogdan, "Romanian Reflections," *NATO Review* (Summer-Autumn 2000), 23.

is “more professional and mobile with a high degree of interoperability with NATO forces.”⁶²

As the first nation to participate in the PFP program in 1994, Romania continues to support NATO activities. Romania has contributed to NATO operationally as well, such as providing peacekeepers to operations in Bosnia and Kosovo, as well as granting NATO access to its airspace and establish airspace management equipment within its borders during combat operations against Serbia in 1999.⁶³

Slovakia

Like an identical twin that always seems to be in the shadow of its sibling, Slovakia has seen its neighbor and former fellow countrymen in the Czech Republic integrate politically, economically, and military into the West. However, they believe they have made up for their shortcomings in the initial round of expansion and are now better prepared to join the alliance. Even though it has been parliamentary democracy since 1993, its government, led by Vladimir Meciar, was widely thought of as corrupt, not representative of ethnic minorities (primarily ethnic Hungarians), and possessing a shaky human rights record.⁶⁴ With these glaring deficiencies, it is no surprise they were not invited to join NATO in 1997.

With the election of Rudolf Schuster and a supporting coalition focused on entry into the EU and NATO, the Slovak Republic has improved its record to make it a strong candidate for an invitation to join the alliance. Economically, they are still recovering

⁶² Ibid, 24.

⁶³ Ibid. Although NATO’s attack against Serbia in 1999 was supported by the Romanian government and most of its population, there were some groups that opposed it, primarily because of the economic impacts caused by the interruption of trade along the Danube River.

⁶⁴ Johnathan Sunley, “The Continent Checking Slovakia,” *National Review* (9 November 1998), 1. Mr. Sunley was an official observer of the Slovak elections in 1998.

from the Meciar era that caused foreign investment, a vital nutrient for a growing free market economy, to shy away from Slovakia.⁶⁵

Militarily, Slovakia receives close to 2% of the GDP and is in the process of reducing its personnel and modernizing its equipment to become more interoperable with NATO forces. It has participated in numerous PFP exercises in the last few years, with their newly formed Rapid Reaction Battalion a key player in many of them to demonstrate the country's commitment and potential contribution to NATO.⁶⁶

Slovenia

Slovenia, a former Yugoslav republic until 1991, has made a solid transition to democracy and a free market economy. Even its location is favorable to admission into NATO, with borders touching Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Croatia. Slovenia's government is a parliamentary democracy and has arguably had the easiest transition to democracy of all the former Warsaw Pact countries, perhaps due to its strong cultural and historical ties to the West, as well as having a functioning industrial infrastructure already established.⁶⁷

Slovenia's economy is strong and has significant trading relationships with the EU as well as foreign investment. It has the highest GDP per capita of all the transitioning democracies and is growing at nearly 4% annually. Slovenia committed 1.6% of its GDP towards its military in 1999, but anticipates increasing this figure to 2% within three years.⁶⁸

The Slovenian military is highly respected in its country and throughout Europe, largely due to their ten day war of independence against the Serbs in June 1991, which resulted in the Yugoslav government deciding to forego trying to keep Slovenia part of

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Bell, 30.

⁶⁷ Jeff Moore, "Country Profile of the Republic of Slovenia" (May 1998), 41.

⁶⁸ CIA Factbook (2000), accessed on 16 March 2001 at

their country and concentrate on Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Slovenia practices civilian control of the military, is active in PFP events, participates in peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, and is modernizing its forces to meet NATO standards.⁶⁹

Summary

The nine NATO aspirant countries would like to see their future security guaranteed by NATO, but it is highly unlikely that all or perhaps even most will make the cut in the next round of enlargement scheduled to commence at the 2002 NATO Summit in Prague. For the United States, it is important that they maintain their commitment to democracy and a free market economy, but it must consider all the ramifications of enlargement in order to not reduce the cohesion or effectiveness of the alliance as a whole. After briefly describing the conditions that exist in the countries wishing to join the alliance and their preparation for entry, it is necessary to evaluate NATO expansion from a US perspective and recommend a strategy for future expansion.

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/si.html> .

⁶⁹ LTC Peter Zakrajsek (Slovene Army), phone interview conducted 19 February 2001. The author was the sponsor of LTC Zakrajsek while they were students at the Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas in 1999-2000. LTC Zakrajsek now commands an infantry battalion in the Slovenian Army.

CHAPTER 3: NATO Expansion – A Recommended US Position

“NATO cannot long survive if the borders it protects are not threatened while it refuses to protect the borders of adjoining countries that do feel threatened.”⁷⁰

The United States now stands at a crossroads regarding its relations with a Europe that is increasingly more integrated not only in the political and economic arenas, but is beginning to develop independent military entities that do not include United States forces. The United States can either encourage these developments and begin a gradual withdrawal from European affairs (which would most likely result in the dissolution of NATO), or it can capitalize on the investments paid for in blood in WWII and money during the Cold War and do all that it can to strengthen the alliance and maintain a leadership role. This monograph asserts the latter option as the best course of action to pursue. This chapter will discuss why it is necessary to enlarge the alliance, evaluate the aspirant countries, and recommend which countries the United States should support to join the alliance in 2002.

Why Enlarge?

The United States should support a policy of continued NATO expansion for the following reasons: it represents consistent foreign policy, it further solidifies Eastern Europe's transition to democratic governments and free market economies, and reduces ambiguity and vulnerability in Eastern Europe should a resurgent Russia turn away from democracy and pursue regional hegemony once again.

With the addition of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, the alliance began a period of enlargement meant to erase the artificial Cold War divisions that divided Europe for almost half a century. This “first step” is clearly just that and other “steps” must logically follow to maintain any continuity in United States foreign policy regarding

⁷⁰ Dr. Henry Kissinger, quoted in Adam Garfinkle, “Expanding NATO,” *Current* (March/April 1997), 24.

Europe. Clearly, the three newest NATO members are really not that different from many of the current aspirant countries. By no means does this imply that all the aspirant countries should gain entrance, but it does mean that several are very likely to follow in the path of the three newest members and easily integrate into the alliance and contribute. Enlarging NATO, even gradually, will provide it with the political momentum already set in motion and credibility to remain a lasting influence in Europe for the foreseeable future.⁷¹

The NATO aspirant countries have established democratic governments and have made significant progress in making the difficult transition to a free market economy. The United States and Western Europe have the responsibility to “give these countries a roof for their reconstruction more than a wall against an external threat.”⁷² Not only have they changed politically and economically, these countries have also established civilian control over their military and gone to great lengths to solve long-standing border disputes with their neighbors.⁷³ Although these considerations are not the only ones that the United States must consider regarding NATO enlargement, the fact remains that many of the aspirant countries have paid dearly to do all that the West has asked in order to join “the club.”

Enlarging NATO to include more countries of the former Warsaw Pact than the three newest countries would send a clear signal to Russia that they no longer dominate Central and Eastern Europe. Although this might not be advisable in the case of the Baltic countries, it is definitely so for the rest of the aspirants. To not expand at all in order to appease Russia would “be taken by the Russians as tacit U.S. acceptance of

⁷¹ Jeffrey Simon, “The Next Round of NATO Enlargement,” *Strategic Forum* (October 2000), 3.

⁷² Adam Garfinkle, “Expanding NATO,” *Current* (March/April 1997), 24.

⁷³ U.S. Department of State, “Why NATO Enlargement is in America’s National Interest,” accessed on 23 February 2001 at www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/fs_980219_4points.html , 1.

Moscow's right to define Central Europe as its security glacis."⁷⁴ Russia has throughout history seen periods of strength and periods of weakness. Although its tide is now at low ebb, this will not likely be the case for long. Failing to act now and create a security architecture that will strengthen Europe as a whole and become accepted over time could very well be costly in the future.

Evaluating NATO Expansion

There is little doubt that the United States and its allies in Western Europe that have long comprised NATO would love to fully integrate all of Europe into the alliance. The community of nations that make up NATO are dedicated to preserving peace and collectively acting against aggressors when one member is threatened, and it is no surprise that the new democracies barely a decade away from communism eagerly pursue acceptance. However, it would not be wise for the alliance to blindly accept new members regardless of the performance of their government, economy, or geographic location.

Although there are perhaps many ways to determine whether or not the United States should support a given country for entrance into the alliance, this monograph will use suitability, feasibility, and acceptability as the baseline evaluation criteria for the aspirant countries' bid to join the alliance. This evaluation will conclude in a recommended United States strategy for the 2002 NATO Summit to include which countries it should support for entrance into the alliance.

Suitability

This monograph defines suitability for alliance entrance as a subjective determination of whether or not it would solidify an aspirant country's transition to a democratic government and free market economy. Although the act of joining and participating in a military alliance is not directly related to democratic governments and free market

⁷⁴ Garfinkle, 23.

economies, in the case of NATO, it is truly a description of the countries that make up the alliance and is necessary for entrance. NATO is perhaps like no other alliance before it and is “the military expression of a community of shared values.”⁷⁵

All nine aspirant countries have democratically elected governments and have embraced capitalism, albeit with varying degrees of success. In many of the countries, the economic transition has been painful and they are looking forward to having more prosperous economies like those found in the West. Their governments have sought to join NATO not only for security reasons but also because of the status and instant credibility it would bring the country diplomatically and economically.

By inviting an aspirant country to join the alliance, the West would be formally welcoming them into this “community of shared values” that would cement their transition to democracy and capitalism. Thus, all nine aspirant countries are suitable candidates by this definition. Their entry would signify that the price they have paid for their difficult transition was not without gain and would make it extremely unlikely that it was only temporary.

Feasibility

This criteria is a subjective determination of whether or not the aspirant countries have or will likely meet the political, economic, and military conditions required to join the alliance. However, since the projected NATO Summit is still at least one year away, the aspirant countries still have time to make adjustments where required.⁷⁶

Politically, all aspirant countries have democratically elected governments and have gone to great lengths to solve outstanding border disputes and provide representation to ethnic minorities. Although it is beyond the scope of this monograph to discuss the

⁷⁵ Jackson, 48.

⁷⁶ Additionally, in most cases the latest information available is from 1999. Although feasibility would usually be an objective evaluation, it will be “projected” and be more of a subjective evaluation.

progress each aspirant country has made beyond that described in chapter two, it is necessary to discuss an aspirant country that falls short of where it needs to be politically for entrance into the alliance, namely Albania.

Albania had significant governmental, economic, and military problems only four years ago that included devastating pyramid investment schemes, widespread rioting and looting, collapse of the government, and virtual dissolution of the military. This resulted in a multinational peacekeeping force being sent to Albania to control the chaos.⁷⁷ That is hardly the kind of partner any country wants in an alliance, although they have significantly stabilized their country since that time.

On a positive note, NATO did use Albanian territory as a base of operations for a potential ground operations during its 1999 campaign against Yugoslavia in Kosovo. Although ethnic Albanians were the object of Western sympathy in Kosovo, the March 2001 battles in Macedonia between ethnic Albanians, calling for a “Greater Albania,” and Macedonian troops hardly bring a sense of stability to the Balkans.⁷⁸ It is unknown how much support they receive from Albania, but perceptions are that the country supports it, *or at least cannot control it*. For all of these reasons, it is infeasible for the United States to support an Albanian invitation to join NATO next year, although there is no reason they cannot continue to improve and join the alliance at a later date.

All aspirant countries exercise civilian control of the military and have been active participants in PFP events and most have conducted peacekeeping operations such as those in Bosnia and Kosovo next to NATO units. They are also streamlining their militaries so that they can provide small but capable forces equitable to the size of their country in accordance with NATO desires.

⁷⁷ Alexander T. Roney, “Country Profile of Albania,” (February 1999), 2.

⁷⁸ Erlanger, A-6.

According to the latest information available, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia are the only countries that already allocate 2% of their GDP to defense related activities, which is required by NATO. However, the other countries have plans to meet that standard by the time the debates on further expansion are finished next year.⁷⁹ Thus, for the purposes of feasibility, all aspirant countries except Albania should receive United States support to enter NATO next year.

Acceptability

This criteria is subjective as well and determines whether the potential negative consequences of additional NATO expansion is worth the potential positive advantages. One potential negative consequence would be the cost of supporting new members should their economies fail. Another potential negative consequence of a much more serious nature would be alienating Russia to such a degree that they become adversarial, turn away from democracy, or seek stronger ties with China.

Regarding the potentiality that the rest of the alliance might have to carry the load of a new member that undergoes unforeseen severe economic distress that effects their ability to contribute to the alliance, it is an entirely possible outcome. Many of the aspirant countries have undergone a great struggle transitioning to market based economies. However, the economies and armed forces of many of the leading NATO countries (e.g. United States, Germany, Great Britain) dwarf any of the aspirant countries' economies and armed forces to such a degree that they could absorb the temporary shortfalls in order to maintain the alliance. This is a risk that the current NATO members must take if they want a stable and secure Europe united by shared values and common defense.

How further NATO expansion impacts the West's relations with Russia is the biggest issue facing alliance members in preparation for the 2002 NATO Summit in Prague.

⁷⁹ This is a synopsis of the information described about the aspirant countries in chapter two.

After the initial round of enlargement, NATO went to great lengths to assuage Russia's concern that three of its former "buffer" states were now part of the alliance it had long considered the enemy, such as creating the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) in 1997 that gave Russia a voice, but not a vote, in NATO actions.⁸⁰

However, these overtures can only go so far. The author Robert Kaplan said that "it is possible to predict a country's future based on its past."⁸¹ This is especially true in the case of Russia concerning the three Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Beginning in 1721, when Peter the Great conquered the region, the Baltic countries were part of Russia until the Russian Revolution near the close of World War I, a period of almost 200 years.⁸² The people of Russia "saw the political and military independence of the Baltic countries as the *unnatural consequence of temporary Russian weakness*, brought about by the world war, the Russian Revolution, and the ensuing Russian civil war."⁸³

The Baltic countries' independence lasted barely twenty years before they were incorporated into the Soviet Union, which lasted until its demise just ten years ago. Clearly, the Russians again view Baltic independence as merely another *unnatural consequence of temporary Russian weakness*. The Russian people do not view the post-World War II dominance of Eastern Europe with the same passion. Although they did not like Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic joining NATO, they condoned it nonetheless because they never considered them part of "Russia" in a historical sense. The same would be the case for the rest of the NATO aspirant countries *except for the former Soviet Republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania*. Additionally, ethnic Russians

⁸⁰ International Security Affairs, 34.

⁸¹ Robert Kaplan visited the School of Advanced Military Studies on 11 December 2000.

⁸² David Mackenzie and Michael W. Curran, *A History of Russia and the Soviet Union*, third ed., (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1987), 266.

⁸³ James Kurth, "The Baltics: Between Russia and the West," *Current History* (October 1999), 335.

make up significant percentages of their population: 28% in Estonia, 33% in Latvia, and 8% in Lithuania.⁸⁴

When she was Secretary of State in 1997, Madeline Albright said that “We must pledge that the first members will not be the last and that no European democracy will be excluded because of where it sits on the map.”⁸⁵ This author asserts that this disregards the realities of geopolitics and that inviting any of the Baltic countries to join the alliance would be a tremendous mistake that would alienate Russia. To predict exactly what actions Russia would take, or even be capable of in their current state of weakness, would be pure conjecture. However, it is not hard to imagine the scenario where an authoritarian regime capitalizes on issues like this to turn Russia away from democracy to regain its lost pride and respect, similar to the way Weimar Germany led to the rise of Nazism in the early 1930s.⁸⁶

Although NATO is by definition an alliance, there is little likelihood that an adversary would threaten its borders in the near future. However, that might not be the case in the future and the alliance would be wise to be cognizant of how far they extend their eastern borders. The only Baltic country that borders a NATO country is Lithuania, which has a 40 mile border with Poland.⁸⁷ Even a cursory look at the map by an amateur strategist would beg the question of how it could be possible to defend their borders against a resurgent Russia determined to take them back. It just doesn’t make sense for the alliance and thus fails the evaluation criteria of acceptability.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 337.

⁸⁵ Madeline Albright, quoted in John Hillen and Michael P. Noonan, “The Geopolitics of NATO Enlargement,” *Parameters* (Autumn 1998), 21.

⁸⁶ John Hillen and Michael P. Noonan, “The Geopolitics of NATO Enlargement,” *Parameters* (Autumn 1998), 27.

⁸⁷ Michael G. Roskin, “The Emerging Europe: Power Configurations for the Next Century,” *Parameters* (Winter 1999-2000), 94.

CHAPTER 4: Recommendations and Conclusions

“A persistent and repeated error throughout history has been the failure to understand that the preservation of peace requires active effort, planning, the expenditure of resources, and sacrifice, just as war does. In the modern world especially the sense that peace is natural and war an aberration has led to a failure in peacetime to consider the possibility of another war, which in turn, has prevented the efforts to preserve the peace.”⁸⁸

The United States must continue to sponsor NATO enlargement to further the development of democracy and capitalism in Eastern Europe, a policy that had its origins in the PFP program and already has produced three new allies in the opening round of enlargement completed in 1999. However, the United States must be careful which countries it supports for an invitation to join the alliance at the second round of enlargement next year in Prague.

The United States strategy toward NATO enlargement should focus on reducing ambiguity in the region by welcoming those countries into the alliance that meet entrance standards and possess the potential to improve the alliance overall, while maintaining a peaceful and trusting relationship with Russia. For these reasons, the NATO aspirant countries of Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, and Slovakia pass the tests for suitability, feasibility, and acceptability and should receive United States support to join the alliance at the NATO Summit next year in Prague.

The United States should observe and help foster further democratic reform, governmental control, and economic growth in Albania over the next few years. Although they are not yet ready for NATO membership, they have made significant improvements since their days of anarchy in 1997 and should be strongly encouraged and considered for membership at a later date.

⁸⁸ Donald Kagan, quoted in a speech by the Honorable William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defense before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 24 February 1998.

By adapting this strategy, United States relations with Russia will not diminish to “Cold War II” levels over the Baltic countries. This will make it more palpable for the Russians to accept another NATO expansion to the east and gives them the respect they deserve. This will be a strongly debated issue in the next year and many believe the United States should support membership for one or all of the Baltic countries. However, this discounts Russia’s historical perspective and does not consider the realities of geopolitics where geography still matters, even in the age of globalization.⁸⁹

Many people, especially in the Baltic countries, might feel that the West will have misled, if not betrayed, the Baltic countries if they do not invite them to join the alliance. One option that the United States should consider is supporting a relationship similar to that of Finland, where they would be “economically and culturally part of the West, politically independent of the West and Russia, and militarily neutral and unthreatening to Russia.”⁹⁰ NATO will continue to evolve and transform to fit the political realities existing at any point in time, but it would be ill-advised to try to extend its borders to include any of the Baltic countries in the next round of enlargement.

The figure below depicts what the NATO alliance will look like if it approves this position:

⁸⁹ John Hillen and Michael P. Noonan, 26.

⁹⁰ Kurth, 336.

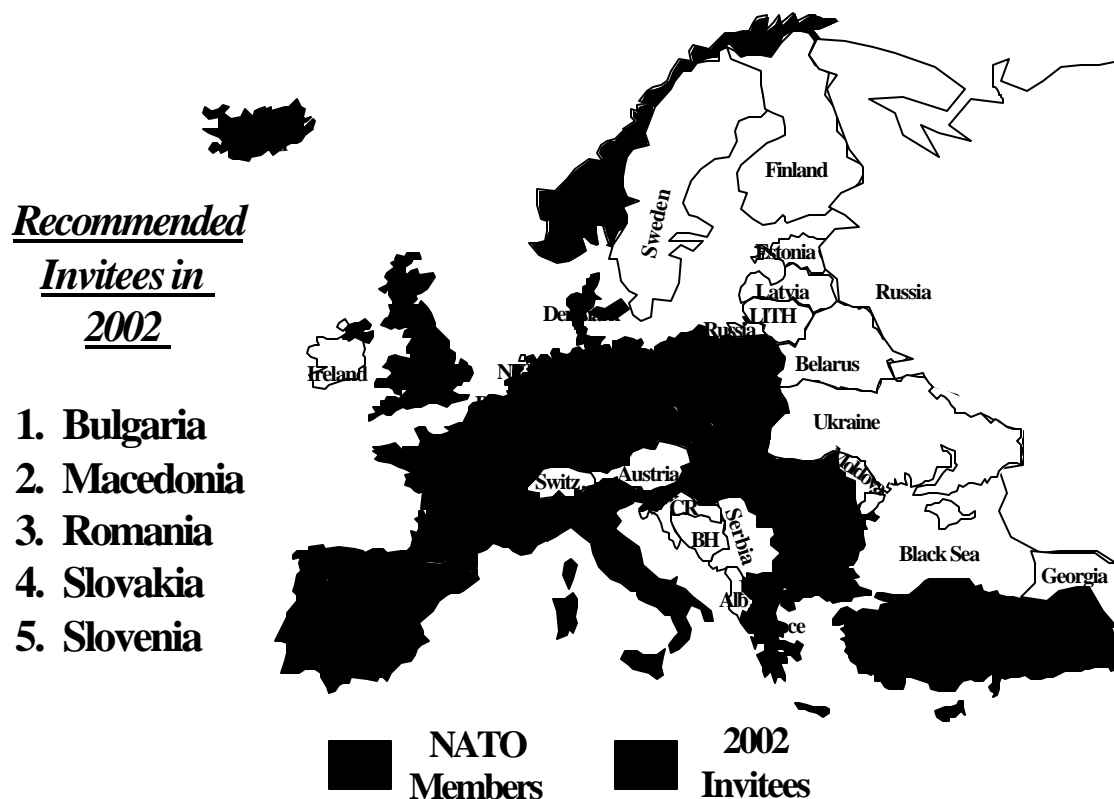


Figure 3: Recommended NATO Enlargement in 2002

In conclusion, the United States is likely to continue the policy of engagement in Europe that it has followed since the end of the Cold War. NATO has bravely chosen to step out of the fixed positions it held for over four decades and expand to include countries once dominated by communism, a process that is underway. The United States has a vested interest in ensuring that this process continues in Eastern Europe in order to further develop stable democracies practicing free trade in a secure environment. NATO is the military expression of those values and it must grow to reflect the political and economic realities of Europe in the twenty-first century if it is to survive.

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